

Bear Lake-Lake Board

“Protecting Our Lake Today For Tomorrow’s Generations”

Produced by PLM Lake & Land Management Corp.

The Bear Lake - Lake Board is a government entity established under the Michigan Natural Resources & Environmental Act, Act 451 of 1994 - Part 309. This board is in place to carry out improvements to Bear Lake, located in Muskegon County Michigan.

Planning for Bear Lake's Future

Protecting and preserving Bear Lake requires long-term planning and a reliable source of funding. As the current five-year Special Assessment District (SAD) comes to a close, the Bear Lake Lake Board (BLLB) has begun the process of developing a new five-year assessment for 2027–2031 to continue the lake management program.

The previous assessment provided funding for aquatic plant management, water quality monitoring, and other lake improvement efforts that have helped maintain the health and recreational value of Bear Lake. Through careful planning and responsible financial stewardship, the BLLB was able to extend the benefits of those funds well beyond the original assessment period while continuing to provide consistent lake management services.

As planning moves forward, the Board encourages all property owners to stay informed and involved. A public hearing will be scheduled as part of the assessment process, and residents will be notified once the date is finalized. We also invite you to attend any BLLB meeting, visit www.bllb.org, or follow the Bear Lake Lake Board on Facebook to learn more about the proposed assessment and stay up to date on future developments.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to protect and preserve Bear Lake for generations to come.

PLANNING TODAY FOR A HEALTHY Tomorrow

The Bear Lake Lake Board is working together with our community to protect and preserve Bear Lake for generations to come.



Healthy
Lake



Smart
Management



Strong
Community

Thank You, Laketon Township

The Bear Lake Lake Board would like to recognize and thank Laketon Township for its leadership in securing grant funding for the improvements to the Horton Park boat launch. This project represents a significant investment in Bear Lake, providing safer, more convenient public access while supporting responsible recreation for residents and visitors alike.

The new launch is a tremendous improvement over the previous facility, with better access, improved functionality, and an updated appearance that will benefit the community for years to come. If you haven't had a chance to drive by, we encourage you to stop and take a look at the finished project.



Stay Connected with the Bear Lake Lake Board

The Bear Lake Lake Board offers several ways to stay informed about lake management activities, upcoming meetings, treatment schedules, and important announcements.

BLLB Website

Visit www.bllb.org for meeting dates, treatment schedules, board packets, meeting minutes, treatment maps, and other lake information.

Facebook

Follow the Bear Lake Lake Board on Facebook for reminders, project updates, and community announcements.

Aquatic Plant Treatment Notifications

Beginning in 2026, the BLLB is using the Nixle notification system for treatment alerts. Because contact information could not be transferred from the previous MailChimp system, all residents must sign up again to continue receiving notifications.

Residents of the City of North Muskegon will receive notifications through the City's existing Nixle system. Residents of both North Muskegon and Laketon Township may also choose to receive treatment notifications by email or text through the BLLB website.

Sign Up Today!

Text **BEARLAKE** to **888777** to enroll in Nixle notifications, or visit www.bllb.org/signup-form/ to receive email and text updates.

Pressing Issues for Lake Residents

Life on the lake offers beauty and recreation, but it also comes with responsibilities. This issue highlights the most pressing environmental and quality-of-life concerns facing our shoreline community and what each of us can do to help.

Water Quality and Clarity: Clean water is essential for recreation and a healthy lake. Reducing pollution and properly maintaining septic systems help protect water quality.

Shoreline Stability and Erosion: Healthy shorelines reduce erosion and protect both property and the lake. Native plants and minimizing shoreline disturbance can help prevent erosion.

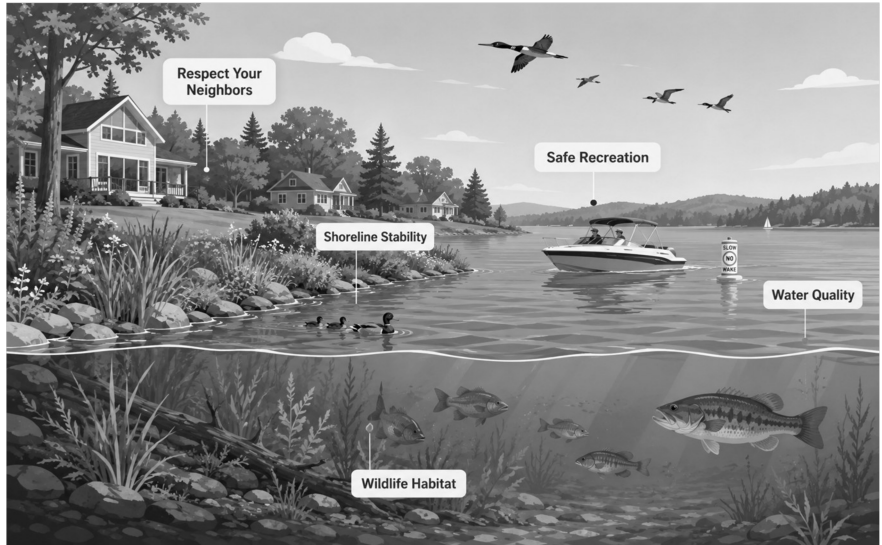
Habitat Protection for Fish and Wildlife: Fish and wildlife depend on healthy shoreline habitats. Preserving native vegetation helps support a balanced lake ecosystem.

Safe and Respectful Recreation: Everyone shares the lake. Following boating laws, respecting wake zones, and being courteous to others help keep the lake safe and enjoyable.

Peaceful Enjoyment for All Residents: Being a good neighbor helps everyone enjoy lake living. Keeping noise reasonable, maintaining safe boating speeds near shorelines, docks, and swimmers, and respecting the many ways people enjoy the lake all contribute to a safe and enjoyable season.



A natural shoreline along Bear Lake that helps buffer nutrients.



Pollution From Lawn Maintenance Programs

Fertilizer doesn't just help lawns grow, it can also feed algae when it washes into the lake after rain. Excess nutrients, especially phosphorus, encourage algae growth, which can turn the water green, reduce water clarity, and block sunlight needed by beneficial aquatic plants. Algae blooms can also lower oxygen levels in the water as they decompose, stressing fish and other aquatic life. By using fertilizer sparingly, choosing phosphorus-free products when appropriate, and keeping fertilizer away from the shoreline, every property owner can help protect the health and beauty of our lake.

What Can You Do?

- **Create a Greenbelt:** Establish a natural buffer of shrubs, flowers, or trees between your lawn and the lake to filter runoff. Choose native plants that don't shed their foliage into the water.
- **Fertilize Responsibly:** Apply fertilizer only when the grass is actively growing to minimize nutrient loss into the lake.
- **Maintain Grass Height:** For optimal root growth, mow your grass no shorter than 3 inches. Taller grass retains more moisture and reduces nutrient runoff.
- **Clean the Shoreline:** Remove aquatic weeds and shoreline debris regularly, and keep leaves and grass clippings out of the lake. As they decompose, they contribute to muck buildup and add nutrients that fuel algae and weed growth.
- **Use Silt Fences During Construction:** If you're building or doing yard work, always install silt fences to prevent soil erosion and the introduction of excess sediment into the water.
- **Manage Animal Waste:** Promptly remove dog droppings from your lawn and dispose of them in a trash container. Avoid feeding wildlife along the shoreline, as it increases waste in the water.

Lawn Fertilizer

Look for fertilizers with a "0" as the middle number (N-P-K), such as 32-0-4, 32-0-10, or 10-0-2. These phosphorus-free, slow-release fertilizers help maintain a healthy lawn while reducing the nutrients that contribute to algae growth in our lake.

Examples:

- Scotts Turf Builder Lawn Food – 32-0-4 (slow release nitrogen)
- Purely Organic Lawn Food – 10-0-2 (organic, slow release)
- LESCO Professional Turf Fertilizer – 32-0-10 (professional - grade, slow release)

*University of Michigan—Dearborn



Protecting Bear Lake: A Science-Based Approach

Maintaining a healthy lake requires more than treating aquatic plants when they become a nuisance. The Bear Lake Lake Board works with PLM Lake & Land Management to monitor lake conditions throughout the growing season and make management decisions based on science, not a fixed treatment schedule.

Beginning in May and continuing through September, the lake is surveyed monthly to evaluate aquatic plant growth, identify invasive species, monitor algae, and assess overall lake health. During May and September, PLM also conducts a state-approved Aquatic Vegetation Assessment Site (AVAS) survey, which provides a comprehensive inventory of aquatic plant species and helps track changes in the lake's plant community over time.

The primary goal of the management program is to reduce invasive (exotic) aquatic plants while promoting a healthy, diverse native plant community. Native aquatic plants provide important habitat for fish and wildlife, improve water quality, and help maintain a balanced ecosystem. Rather than eliminating all aquatic vegetation, the objective is to manage plant growth so it does not significantly interfere with shoreline recreation, boating, swimming, or fishing while preserving the many ecological benefits that healthy native plants provide.

When treatments are necessary, they are performed using products approved for aquatic use and applied in accordance with Michigan EGLE permits and label requirements. Because treatment recommendations are based on the monthly surveys, most treatments are targeted spot treatments, meaning only specific areas of the lake that require management are treated. It is uncommon for the entire shoreline or lake to be treated at one time.

Following a treatment, residents should review the treatment notification sign posted near the treated shoreline. The sign identifies the products that were applied and explains any temporary water use restrictions, such as swimming or irrigation. Since treatments are typically limited to specific areas, only those treated shorelines will be posted.



New Invasive Plant to Watch For: Water Primrose

A new invasive aquatic plant, Water primrose, has recently been discovered in a few lakes and rivers throughout West Michigan. While it has not been found in Bear Lake, its spread serves as an important reminder of how quickly invasive species can move between waterbodies. Water primrose grows along shorelines and in shallow water, producing bright yellow flowers and forming dense mats that can crowd out native plants, reduce wildlife habitat, and interfere with boating, fishing, and swimming. It spreads by both seeds and plant fragments, making early detection critical.

PLM will continue to monitor for new invasive species as part of its regular lake management program. If you notice an unfamiliar aquatic plant along your shoreline, please report it to the BLLB. Finding invasive species early gives us the best opportunity to prevent them from becoming established.



BEAR LAKE LAKE BOARD

Lake Board Members



Paul Pek:

Chairperson
Laketon Township Representative



paul.pек.bllb@gmail.com



Jim Panici:

Vice Chair
Riparian Representative



james.panici.bllb@gmail.com



Craig Howell:

Treasurer
North Muskegon Representative



craig.howell.bllb@gmail.com



Stephanie Barrett:

Water Resources Commissioner
Muskegon County



barrettst@co.muskegon.mi.us



Jessica Cook:

Muskegon County Commissioner



cookje@muskegoncounty.net

Photos provided by EGLE, Invasive Species Div.

Septic Systems

Did you know... That you are responsible for the maintenance and operation of your septic system? Did you know if your septic system is malfunctioning you could be polluting Bear Lake? Did you know that maintaining your system protects your investment in your property? Did you know that you should periodically inspect and pump out your septic system?

If your septic system isn't maintained you might need to replace it which can cost thousands of dollars. A malfunctioning system can contaminate ground water that might be your drinking water source. If you are planning to sell your home the septic system MUST be in good working order.

Protect your septic system.

1. Inspect your system (every three years) and pump your tank as necessary, at least every 3-5 years.
2. Efficiently use water in your household.
3. Don't dispose of household hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets.
4. Care for your drain field. Avoid driving or parking vehicles on your drain field. Plant only grass over your drain field to avoid damage from roots.

For more information contact your local health department or visit www.epa.gov/own/onsite

Septic Replacement Information: <https://michigansaves.org/septic>

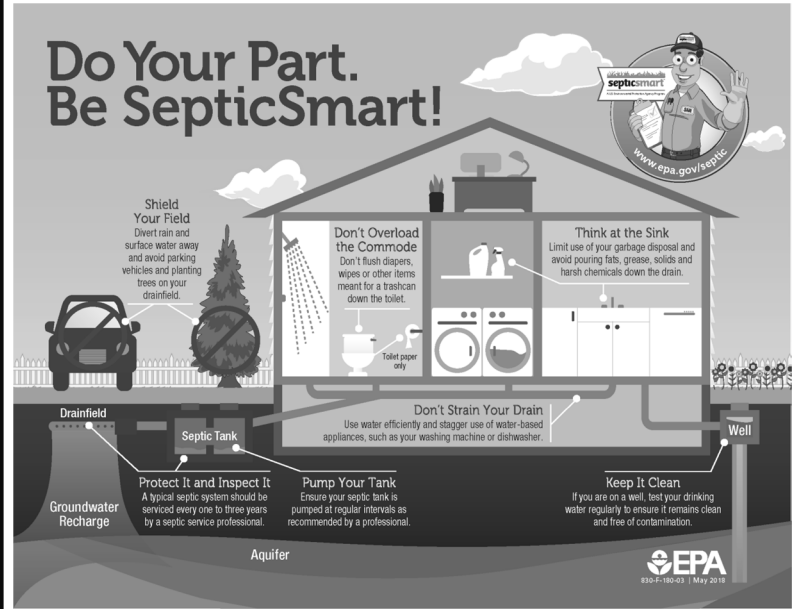
Septic Checklist for Lakefront Homes

Date of Last Inspection: _____

Date of Last Pump -out: _____

System Age & Design Type: _____

Next Scheduled Service: _____



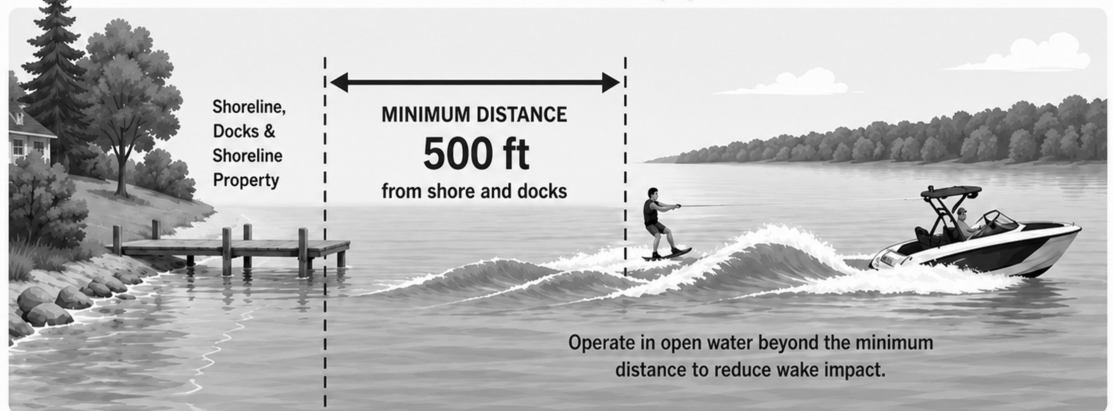
The DNR released its final report on the impacts of wake boats to our inland lakes and fisheries. Based on the water quality concerns (i.e. damage to shorelines, bottomlands, and fish habitat) found in their study, recommendations have been made for all boaters. Also, bipartisan legislation has been introduced that, if approved, will greatly change the way these types of boats are used in the state. Contact your legislators, Sen. Jon Bumstead: SenJBumstead@senate.michigan.gov, Rep. Will Snyder: WillSnyder@house.mi.gov with your comments.

Based on the recommendations there are no appropriate areas to wake boat on Bear Lake.

The full DNR report can be found at: mymlsa.org

RESPONSIBLE WAKEBOARDING

Protect Our Shoreline. Enjoy Our Lake.



WHY IT MATTERS



FISH HABITAT
Large wakes can disturb shallow water habitats important for fish and wildlife.



SHORELINE & PROPERTY
Waves increase erosion, causing loss of land and damage to shoreline areas.



DOCKS & STRUCTURES
Large wakes can damage docks, lifts and moored boats, and shorten the life of structures.

GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE WAKEBOARDING



MAINTAIN DISTANCE
Stay at least 500 ft from shore, docks and other structures.



AVOID REPETITIVE PASSES
Avoid repetitive wakeboarding in narrow or shallow areas, especially near shore.



FOLLOW THE RULES
Obey posted "No Wake" and speed zone signs at all times.

Be courteous. Be responsible. Be the reason our lake stays beautiful for generations.

